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Press Release

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IMCOM-Europe offers tips for shipping second privately owned vehicle

HEIDELBERG, Germany -- Normally, Soldiers and Department and Defense civilians with permanent-change-of-station orders are entitled to ship one privately owned vehicle at government expense from overseas locations.

However, many people nowadays have two vehicles, wanting to return home with both. If so you will be paying out of your own pocket for it, said Robin Brown-Jones, Installation Management Command-Europe logistics division.

Plus, she said, preparing your car beforehand and finalizing all requirements "is a must."

Brown-Jones suggests the following tips to ensure your second U.S.-specification POV is readied for shipping:

Prior planning is a must. There are several private commercial shipping companies available. But due to the high volume of summer moves, you should contact the commercial shipping company as soon as are certain that you will ship your second POV.

Get a free rate quotation. A PCS move can be costly. Knowing the cost of shipping a second POV, months before you move, allows planning a budget accordingly. The price is normally all-inclusive and includes inland transportation costs to a port, German and U.S. port charges, and customs fees.

Have proper documentation. Documentation normally needed to ship a POV from overseas is: PCS orders, vehicle registration, military or DoD identification.

Ensure the vehicle is clean. All vehicles must meet U.S. Department of Agriculture inspection requirements prior to shipping – this is the law. Specifically, vehicles must be free of dirt, soil, plant life, animal life and other organizational hazards. This means the exterior, interior, engine, engine compartment and radiator. The entire interior of the POV must be vacuumed, including the trunk area, and all personal effects must be removed from the vehicle, even air fresheners.

“If your vehicle does not meet these standards, Brown-Jones stressed, “it will not be shipped.”

Drain fuel tank. Ensure your vehicle has no more than a quarter tank of fuel at time of shipment.

Check your stickers. The POV must be a U.S.-spec vehicle and have both the Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Transportation sticker affixed

The EPA sticker should clearly be visible in the engine area. It’s usually white with the word *catalyst* listed on the bottom.

The DOT sticker should be clearly visible in the door jam area. It, too, is usually white with the vehicle identification number and the month and year of manufacture listed at the bottom.

If your vehicle is missing either of these stickers, normally due to extensive body work, repainting or customization, you must prove the vehicle was registered stateside, or provide a letter from the manufacturer to verify the vehicle is U.S. manufactured and complies with U.S. requirements.

As for European-spec vehicles, they must be shipped through a stateside certified independent commercial importer. A list is available from the EPA.

“This, however, can be an expensive process because the vehicle must also conform to EPA and DOT safety requirements,” Jeff Schott, IMCOM-Europe’s transportation office.

He added that it is important to remember that European-spec vehicles cannot be modified to U.S. standards while physically located overseas.

“Many European companies claim they can convert European-spec POVs to U.S specifications while the POV is still in Europe,” Schott said. “These claims are false.”

CUTLINE: All vehicles shipped stateside must meet U.S. Department of Agriculture inspection requirements, especially cleanliness. (Photo by Christine June)

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The U.S. Army Installation Management Command, Europe Region (IMCOM-Europe) is one of six regional offices created Oct. 24, 2006, (formerly known as Installation Management Agency) as part of an Army-wide initiative to focus management of Army installations around the world under one organization. IMCOM-Europe is responsible for all facets of support for U.S. Army Soldiers and Families in Europe from drivers' licenses to child care to force protection. As the landlord for all U.S. Army facilities in Europe, IMCOM-Europe is responsible for infrastructure and continuing the Army's strong commitment to environmental protection. Its higher headquarters is located in Arlington, Va.